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Senator Dianne Feinstein

of California

Statement of Senator Feinstein On a Delay in the Environmental Impact Statement of the Modern Pit Facility January 28, 2004

Washington, DC -- *The National Nuclear Security Administration today announced that it would delay the final environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Modern Pit Facility -- a proposed \$4 billion plant where new pits for nuclear weapons will be fabricate -- in light of Congressional concerns about its scope and timing. A pit, made of plutonium, triggers a nuclear explosion in all modern thermonuclear weapons.*

Last September, Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) offered an amendment to the Energy and Water Appropriations bill that would have put a stay on site selection for the facility. The following is Senator Feinstein's statement:

"I welcome the delay in the Environmental Impact Statement for the Modern Pit Facility.

This facility, when completed, would be able to produce 250-900 plutonium pits per year. To put this in perspective, if the proposed Modern Pit Facility operated at half of its capacity, it could equal or exceed China's entire nuclear arsenal in one year. This production will be in excess of our current inventory of 15,000 plutonium pits.

We have known for a while now that the Administration is seeking new nuclear weapons, and the construction of the Modern Pit Facility would make the development of these weapons that much easier. In my view, it is a complete mistake to reopen the nuclear door, so I am pleased that the Administration has recognized -- in light of Congressional concern -- that consideration of a Modern Pit Facility is 'premature', at the least.

I believe that the development of new nuclear weapons will hurt our relations with other nations around the globe, our non-proliferation efforts, and the environment.

It is my hope that this decision marks the beginning of a more measured review of the Administration's nuclear program."

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